

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 091257
ORIGIN L-03

INFO OCT-01 OES-07 ARA-10 SS-15 SP-02 EB-08 PM-05
INR-10 ISO-00 /061 R

DRAFTED BY L/OES:DACOLSON:MERS
APPROVED BY L/OES - MARY ELIZABETH HOINKES
ARA - MR. PIERCE (DRAFT)
OES/OFA - MR. BUSBY(DRAFT)
L - MR. FELDMAN (DRAFT)

-----072650 101842Z /41

O 101726Z APR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY NASSAU

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STADIS//////////

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR

SUBJECT: MARITIME BOUNDARIES

1. DEPT HAS SENT FOLLOWING LETTER CLASSIFIED CONFIDENTIAL
TO THE DEPT OF INTERIOR:
BEGIN TEXT: DEAR MR. KRULITZ: IT HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO MY
ATTENTION THAT WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS THE DEPARTMENT OF
THE INTERIOR WILL DECIDE ON WHETHER TO PROCEED WITH THE
CALL FOR NOMINATIONS PROCESS IN THE BLAKE PLATEAU AREA BY
SELECTING TRACTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY. THE DEPARTMENT
OF STATE IS CONCERNED, HOWEVER, THAT CONTINUING THE OUTER
CONTINENTAL SHELF (OCS) PROGRAM IN THE BLAKE PLATEAU AREA,
AT THIS TIME, COULD SERIOUSLY AFFECT OUR RELATIONS WITH
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS AND
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 091257

JEOPARDIZE PENDING MARITIME BOUNDARY NEGOTIATIONS AND
ONGOING MILITARY FACILITIES DISCUSSIONS.

IN OCTOBER 1977, WHEN THE INTERIOR DEPARTMENT INITIATED
THE CALL FOR NOMINATIONS PROCESS BY INVITING EXPRESSIONS
OF INTEREST IN OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF TRACTS IN AN AREA
WHICH CROSSED THE EQUIDISTANT LINE BETWEEN THE U.S. AND

THE BAHAMAS, THE BAHAMIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, PAUL ADDERLEY, PROTESTED THE CALL. THERE ARE NOW INDICATIONS THAT PROCEEDING WITH THE OCS PROGRAM, PRIOR TO THE RESOLUTION OF

THE MARITIME BOUNDARY ISSUE, WILL RESULT IN A SERIES OF DISPUTED CLAIMS AND LEASES WHICH WILL HINDER, RATHER THAN EXPEDITE, THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA.

GIVEN THE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR RELATIONS WITH THE BAHAMIAN GOVERNMENT, THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE JOINS WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE IN REQUESTING THAT THE CALL FOR NOMINATION PROCESS NOT GO FORWARD AT THIS TIME. IN THE INTERIM, WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING CLOSELY WITH INTERIOR ON THIS ISSUE. SINCERELY, LUCY WILSON BENSON. END TEXT.

2. DEPT HAS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT INTERIOR WILL RESPOND FAVORABLY TO THIS LETTER AND WILL INDEFINATELY POSTPONE SALE; ALTHOUGH, THIS IS BY NO MEANS CERTAIN.

3. IF INTERIOR POSTPONES SALE, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT WILL BE MADE ON OR ABOUT APRIL 12.

4. DEPT BELIEVES THAT IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE GCOB BE APPROACHED AT APPROXIMATELY THE SAME TIME THAT PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT IS MADE HERE AND THAT THE FOLLOWING THREE BASIC POINTS BE MADE: (1) THIS ACTION ON USG'S PART IS CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 STATE 091257

DIRECTLY RESPONSIVE TO GCOB CONCERNS; (2) IT IS USG'S HOPE THAT THIS ACTION WILL IMPROVE ATMOSPHERE FOR A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION TO THE MARITIME BOUNDARY QUESTION; AND (3) USG HOPES THAT THE GCOB WILL ADOPT A MUTUAL POLICY OF RESTRAINT.

5. DEPT IS ESPECIALLY CONCERNED THAT GCOB MAKES POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THIS LAST POINT. FYI. DEPT RECOGNIZES THAT GCOB MAY HAVE DIFFICULTY WITH ADOPTING SUCH A POLICY UNTIL SUCH TIME THAT IT BELIEVES IT HAS PUT ITSELF ON AN EQUAL FOOTING IN REGARDS TO THE ACTIONS THE USG HAS TAKEN. END FYI. HOWEVER, GCOB SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO MAKE NO FURTHER MOVE SINCE ACTIONS TAKEN BY USG WERE CONFINED TO VERY LIMITED AREA OF POTENTIAL OVERLAPPING CLAIMS AND U.S. IS IN EFFECT BACKING OFF UNILATERAL ACTION. IT IS IN INTEREST OF BOTH COUNTRIES TO AGREE ON POLICY OF MUTUAL RESTRAINT AND FIND A COOPERATIVE SOLUTION TO BOUNDARY PROBLEMS AND HYDROCARBON DEVELOPMENT. SHOULD THE GCOB TAKE STEPS BEYOND REPEAT BEYOND THE ACTIONS TAKEN BY USG, THIS WOULD OF COURSE BE CAUSE FOR GREAT CONCERN.

. ALTHOUGH DEPT WILL HAVE SOME ADVANCE NOTICE THAT ISSUE IS ABOUT TO BE ADDRESSED, TIMING OF INTERIOR PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT IS UNCERTAIN. DEPT WOULD EXPECT ANNOUNCEMENT WITHIN

HOURS OF DECISION ACTUALLY BEING MADE. MIDDLE OR LATTER
PORTION OF WEEK OF APRIL 10-14 IS 0EST ESTIMATE AS TO
GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENT TIMING, THEREFORE EMBASSY SHOULD KEEP
ABREAST OF AVAILABILITY OF GCOB OFFICIALS DURING THIS
PERIOD.

7. PRESUMING INTERIOR MAKES REQUESTED DECISION, APPROACH
FROM AMBASSADOR TO PINDLING WOULD SEEM TO BE APPROPRIATE
TO MAKE POINTS IN PARA 4 AND 5. ALSO, DEPT BELIEVES THAT
IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR AMBASSADOR AND EMBOFFS TO HAVE
SERVICES OF ONE OR POSSIBLY TWO EXPERTS FAMILIAR WITH U.S.
LEASING PROCESS AND GENERAL BOUNDARY SITUATION DURING
APPROACH TO GCOB ON THIS MATTER, AND IS PREPARED TO SEND
SUCH PERSONS TO NASSAU. WILL KEEP YOU ADVISED.

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PAGE 04 STATE 091257

8. EMB VIEWS ON FOREGOING REQUESTED ASAP. VANCE

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 10 apr 1978
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Disposition Reason:
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Status: NATIVE
Subject: MARITIME BOUNDARIES
TAGS: PBOR, US, HO, INT
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Type: TE
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